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MEMORANDUM FOR CHIEF OF STAFF, U. S. AIR FORCE

SUBJ/FCT: (UNCLASSIFIED) Berlin Air Corridor Operation

1. (UNCLASSIFIED) Reference is made to the questions which arose at the meeting of Joint Chiefs of Staff on 18 March 1959 concerning Berlin air corridor operation.

2. (CONFIDENTIAL) There are no legal restrictions on operation of aircraft above 10,000 feet in the corridors. Western Powers have complied with a self-imposed limitation of 10,000 feet maximum altitude because the Soviet Union has refused to guarantee flight safety above this height.

3. (CONFIDENTIAL) The agreements concerning the Berlin air corridors contain no restrictions on the operation of armed aircraft. The Soviet Union has taken the position that the corridors are for use of transport type aircraft and not for combat aircraft. The United States has rejected this view and stated that we have flown combat aircraft in the corridors in the past and will continue to do so.

4. (SECRET) On 10 September 1958, the JCS approved a USCINCEUR Air Contingency Plan for Berlin which provided for: (a) Measures to be taken in case the Soviets or ODR impede Western air access to Berlin, and (b) Actions required to determine Soviet intentions regarding flights in the corridors above 10,000 feet. The plan was forwarded to State on 7 October 1958 with a request for an expression of the views of the Department of State. No reply has been received to date.

5. (UNCLASSIFIED) Additional information on the above questions is contained in the Berlin Book at Tab 7.

6. (UNCLASSIFIED) This memorandum is classified SECRET because it contains politico-military information the unauthorized disclosure of which, standing alone, could jeopardize the international relations of the United States.

NO JCS OBJECTION TO
DECLASSIFICATION DATE
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